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An opposing view

Weeding out the spies won't give us security

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Spying is a very old business. We know from the Bible that it was already well-established when the Israelites prepared to enter Canaan, and it will certainly remain with us so long as all swords have not been fashioned into plowshares.

The real challenge is not to eliminate espionage against the USA, but to move toward a new system of world politics in which the effects of such spying would be less dangerous.

In the realm of superpower rivalry, genuine security is impossible. Dominated by the implements of megadeaths, the USA and U.S.S.R. lie in stupor, ready to embrace oblivion.

No matter how prudently we may guard our secrets, improved counterintelligence can offer no serious basis for optimism. Faced with a remorseless judgment, it can offer only a temporary reprieve.

We must redouble our efforts to stem the flow of military secrets to the Soviet Union. And we must insure that those indicted for espionage be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. But we should not delude ourselves into believing that such efforts will ever produce safety. Rather, we should recognize that, in a century of unparalleled violence, a continuing arms race will yield only Armageddon.

We should also understand that Soviet threats to our welfare are only marginally dependent upon their access to U.S. military secrets. Although we may prefer to think they could never compete on their own, all available evidence suggests otherwise. Indeed, with today's planetary network of technological innovation, the idea of "military secrets" has

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lost much of its significance.

This development is underscored by U.S. policies that now clear more than 4 million of our countrymen to handle secret or top-secret materials!

Today, the most serious hazard to U.S. security lies not in the failure to control espionage but in the Reagan administration's provocative flirtations with nuclear war. Anesthetized by bravado, the administration ignores all warnings of impending disaster. The result can only be unheroic failure.

Fear is an indispensable corrective to self-deception. By discouraging reasonable fears of national mortality, President Reagan's illusory hopes for "rearmament" point directly to radioactive silence.

We need to allocate more money and manpower to counterintelligence functions, but this should not obscure one overriding fact: In the final analysis, only far-reaching attempts at U.S.-Soviet cooperation can secure peace. By ignoring the forest to scrutinize a few trees, an obsessive concern for counterespionage would miss the point.

The USA and the U.S.S.R. have only two choices: to live together or to die together.

If we choose life, the imperative is clear. We must learn to share this delicate planet or, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea, we will be erased. We must reaffirm that the truest forms of patriotism exist not in the desolate intuitions of an endless Cold War, but in the timeless visions of a harmonious world order.